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INCOMING TELEGRAM Department of State

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
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1. ONE FEATURE OF PLETHORA OF SENATE LISTS PRESENTED FOR ELECTIONS IS FACT THAT NUMBER OF PERSONALITIES PROMINENT DURING DIEM REGIME HAVE RE-EMERGED INTO ACTIVE POLITICAL LIFE. COMMENT ALONG THIS LINE HAS PARTICULARLY FOCUSED ON SENATE LIST NUMBER THREE, HEADED BY TRAN VAN LAM, FORMER MEMBER OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND AMBASSADOR TO AUSTRALIA, 1961-64. (CONSIDERABLE BIO MATERIAL CONCERNING HIM IS AVAILABLE IN DEPARTMENT.) FRANCOIS SULLY OF NEWSWEEK MADE RATHER EXTRAVAGANT SPECULATION TO EMBOFF RECENTLY THAT FORMER DIEMISTS MIGHT UNITE BEHIND ONE OF PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES AND AGAIN BECOME POWER.

2. EMBOFF REVIEWED SITUATION JULY 9 WITH TRAN VAN LAM, WHOM

HE HAD KNOWN DURING PREVIOUS TOUR IN SAIGON. LAM ACKNOWLEDGED THAT SPECULATION HAS IDENTIFIED HIS SENATE LIST AS QTE DIEMIST UNQTE, BUT HE POINTED OUT THAT TWO OF CANDIDATES ON LIST HAD BEEN CABINET MINISTERS UNDER BAO DAI, THAT FOUR OTHERS ARE YOUNGER PERSONALITIES WHO HAVE COME UP IN POST-DIEM PERIOD, WHILE OF QTE DIEMIST UNQTE CANDIDATES (HIMSELF, TRAN CHANH THANH, TRAN TRUNG DUNG, AND PAULINE NGUYEN VAN THO), NEITHER HE NOR THANH HAD BEEN MEMBERS OF CAN LAO PARTY AND COULD NOT BE CONSIDERED IN SAME CATEGORY. HE NOTED THAT OTHER SENATE SLATES INCLUDE CANDIDATES FORMERLY CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH DIEM. (OTHER FORMER DIEMISTS NOW SENATE CANDIDATES INCLUDE VU QUOC THUC, VU QUOC THONG, VO VAN HAI, AND TRAN NGOC LIEN, AMONG OTHERS.)

3. LAM SKETCHED OUT CAMPAIGN ORGANIZATION DOWN TO DISTRICT LEVEL BUT SAID HE ONLY BEGUN TO APPOINT CAMPAIGN AGENTS IN COUNTRYSIDE. HE ANTICIPATED MOST DIFFICULT AREA TO CAMPAIGN IN WILL BE III AND IV CORPS AREAS, SINCE BULK OF REGISTERED VOTERS WILL BE THERE. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION, HE SAID HE HAD NOT

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ANTICIPATED THAT THERE WOULD BE SUCH LARGE NUMBER OF SENATE LISTS, INDICATING HE HAD NOT EXPECTED MORE THAN 30 (VERSUS 64 LISTS ACTUALLY PRESENTED). NOTING THAT TASK FOR VOTER WILL BE TO SELECT SIX LISTS FROM AMONG 60 OR SO, LAM SAID HE FELT PROCESS MIGHT TURN INTO SORT OF LOTTERY, WITH RESULTS THAT CANNOT BE ANTICIPATED. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT HE AND HIS FRIENDS FELT THEY SHOULD PRESENT THEMSELVES IN HOPE THEY WILL BE ABLE CONTRIBUTE TO POLITICAL STABILIZATION OF SVN.

4. COMMENT: RE-EMERGENCE OF SOME FIGURES PROMINENT DURING DIEM PERIOD WHO ARE CAPABLE AND HAVE GOOD REPUTATIONS INEVITABLE DEVELOPMENT, PARTICULARLY IF DAI DOAN KET MOVEMENT TO HAVE ANY MEANING. WHETHER THEY HAVE ANY INFLUENCE IN COUTNRYSIDE AND IN SAIGON IS ANOTHER QUESTION WHICH VERY DIFFICULT TO ASSESS, EVEN WITHOUT HAZARD LARGE NUMBER OF SENATE LISTS PRESENT.

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